

Authority hands out \$3.8 M in casino grants

04 Dec 2011 — Bucks County Courier Times

By Chris English

Staff Writer

Lower Southampton was the biggest winner Friday morning when the Bucks County Redevelopment Authority awarded its annual casino impact grants at the authority's monthly meeting in Bristol.

Of the \$3,801,348 awarded Friday, \$940,808 went to Lower Southampton for road improvements, various pieces of equipment for the township's fire companies and other items.

Money for the grants comes from the Parx Casino in Bensalem, and the \$3.8 million represents 1 percent of electronic games' and slots machines' revenue at the casino this year, said authority solicitor Joe Pizzo. It doesn't include revenue from table games, he added.

Grants awarded Friday will be applied to projects or purchases that must be "substantially completed" by the end of 2012, said Patricia Bachtle, chairwoman of the authority's five-member board of directors that votes on the grants.

Lower Southampton Manager Ted Taylor said the grants announcement made the end of his work week at lot rosier.

"It looks like we got the lion's share this year and we're very appreciative," he said. "We're really tickled pink."

Authority board members Bachtle, Ray Chapman, Anthony Maniscola, Thomas Courduff and William Pezza deliberated over the last few weeks about how to award the \$3.8 million in grants from the \$7.8 million worth of applications the authority received.

"We're not going to make everyone happy but we do our best and I think this represents a nice selection," said Bachtle.

"We know it's rare to get everything you ask for," Taylor said. "We had asked for \$1.5 million worth of items this year. So, we prioritize our list and put the highest priority items at the top and that makes it easier on the authority members to make their decision."

According to regulations set up for the awarding of the casino impact grants, they go to the host municipality Bensalem, Bucks County and the four municipalities that border Bensalem, which are Lower Southampton, Middletown, Bristol Township and Hulmeville.

However, other municipalities can get grant money if their applications are approved by the county. The money, if approved by the authority board, is then awarded to the county and funneled to the non-bordering municipality.

For example, Bristol received \$399,075 this year through the county that will be applied toward construction of the borough's new public works facility.

"The money we got to put toward our project means a lot, and we thank you," Bristol Council President Ralph DiGuseppe told the authority's board Friday. "We don't have the money a lot of these big municipalities have."



The second largest payout Friday was \$750,000 in a joint award to Bristol Township, Bensalem, Middletown and Hulmeville. The award will be split among those four municipalities and used to buy new emergency responder radios being required by the Federal Communications Commission.

A complete list of grants awarded Friday is as follows:

BRISTOL (THROUGH BUCKS COUNTY) : \$399,075 toward new public works facility;

BRISTOL TOWNSHIP: \$50,000 for municipal building roofing project; \$35,000 for a 80 kw portable generator; \$17,000 for GIS mapping services for GIS system upgrade; \$200,000 for road improvements; \$58,000 to the township public works department for a diesel bypass pump; \$48,000 for a township public works department roofing project; \$60,000 for a storm water inlet replacement project; \$30,000 for a municipal complex solar lighting project; \$22,000 for a municipal complex sign project; \$25,000 to the township police department for a gun buyback program;

BUCKS COUNTY: \$100,000 to sustain and expand the Bucks County Health Improvement Project Adult Health Clinic;

FALLS (THROUGH BUCKS COUNTY) : \$216,779 to the township-based Bucks County Swat Team for an M-4 weapon system, K-9 dog, team training, medical bags, an action target runner device, non-lethal ammunition, helmets, sniper rifles, an action target swinger, a vehicle upgrade and a track predators computer;

HULMEVILLE: \$750,000 to be split among the borough, Bensalem, Bristol Township and Middletown for purchase of new emergency responder radios;

LOWER SOUTHAMPTON: \$214,671 for Elmwood Avenue improvements; \$299,029 for light-emitting diode (LED) street lights; \$126,000 for a police patrol vehicle; \$144,221 for other road improvements; \$15,000 to the Lower Southampton Fire Company for a fire hose purchase; \$46,387 to the Feasterville Fire Company for turnout gear and self-contained breathing apparatus equipment; \$12,000 to the township police department and fire marshal's office for automated external defibrillators; \$83,500 to the Feasterville Fire Company for a 2012 Ford F-550 and 4-by-4 truck;

MIDDLETOWN: \$400,000 to the Langhorne-Middletown Fire Company for a 100-foot ladder tower truck; \$145,844 to the township public works department for dump trucks with plows; \$109,230 for an emergency service vehicle for township fire police;

PENNDDEL (THROUGH BUCKS COUNTY) : \$29,612 for police vehicle purchase;

TOWNS AGAINST GRAFFITI (THROUGH BENSALEM) : \$165,000 to the nonprofit TAG organization for graffiti and litter removal.

"Authority hands out \$3.8 M in casino grants" Bucks County Courier Times 04 Dec 2011: A3